retail marketing strategy for Dhara required that the product should be moved through a professional disciplined marketing system to reach sensitive consumer markets and other smaller urban and semi-urban areas. For this reason, NDDB nominated the GCMMF as the sole selling agent for Dhara. This provided Dhara instant access to GCMMF's national distribution network of 22 sales depots, 880 wholesale distributors and 1,50,000 retailers.

(b) While it is true that almost all milk marketing/oil federations have their own distribution setup, most of these marketing networks are in a primary stage of growth having very limited coverage even in their own States. Since Dhara had to be marketed across the country as a part of the market intervention operations strategy, it was necessary that at least in the initial years it is marketed through an established marketing agency with a nation-wise coverage Hence, the milk$oil federations have not been given the responsibility of distributing Dhara at this stage.

(c) The rate of commission for GCMMF is currently 1.7 per cent of the maximum retail price. The other terms of appointment are as per normal trade practice. GCMMF was appointed as the sole selling agent with effect from 15-11-1990 and are eligible to receive the commission at the above rate on all sales made through them after the above date. The accounts will be finalised with GCMMF when they complete one year of the sole selling agency agreement.

Production of Cotton

762. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the figures of per hectare yield of cotton in India, Pakistan, China, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.;

(b) whether it is a fact that per hectare yield of cotton in India is very low; and

(c) if so, what measures Government are going to take to enhance per hectare yield?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The average yield of cotton (lint) during triennium ending 1989 in selected countries is given as below:

Country	Kg. per hectare
India	212
Pakistan	558
China	790
U.S.A.	726
U.S.S.R.	879

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In addition to ensuring remunerative prices to the cotton growers in the country, the Union Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Intensive Cotton Development Programme (ICDP) for increasing productivity and production of cotton in major cotton growing State. Under the scheme assistance is producion and distribution of of quality seeds, organising demonstrations of improved technology, plant protection measures, supply of sprinkler sets etc.

Deaths due to mishap at Meenampatti

763. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of persons died in a worst disaster when a factory at Meenampatti in Tamil Nadu was burnt;

(b) if so, the number of the persons killed and those injured in the mishap; and

(c) what is the outcome of the inquiry, if any, made by Government and what action has been taken by Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SING GHATOWAR): (a) and (b) According to the information received from the Government of Tamil Nadu, a fire accident took place in the Dawn Amorces Fire Works in Anuppankulam near Meenampatti village, Sivakasi on 12.7.91 in which 39 (Thirty nine) persons died and 65 (Sixty five) persons were injured.

(c) The report of the inquiry officer appointed by Government of Tamil Nadu to go into the causes and circumstances under which the said accident took place has not yet been received.

Accidents in the major ports

764. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of accidents which took place in the major ports during the last three years;

(b) the extent of loss to property and human lives in those accidents;

(c) the reasons of those accidents; and

(d) the steps taken to prevent such accidents?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SING GHATOWAR): (a) and (b) The information regarding injuries and loss of human lives is given in the statement enclosed. (See below)

The information regarding the extent of loss to property is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) These accidents were caused due to defects in the lifting machinery and gear, the transport equipment, and handling of cargo, stepping on or striking against objects, fall of persons etc.

(d) The provisions for safety, health and welfare of workers employed in ports and docks are contained in the Dock Workers (Safety, Health & Welfare) Act, 1986 and the rules and the regulations framed thereunder. These provisions are enforced by Inspectorates of Dock Safety Frequent inspection of ships, lifting machinery, cargo handling equipment etc. conduct of training